

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-05 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-10 MC-02
OMB-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 /085 W
-----091546Z 087578 /42

O R 091459Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5187
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 1695

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (RABIN, YITZHAK), IS

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO THE RABIN VISIT

1. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE RABIN VISIT HAS BEEN VERY HEAVY AND FOR THE MOST PART FAVORABLE. INITAIL DELIGHT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S USE OF THE TERM "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS" HAS SOBERED SOMEWHAT WITH THE REPORTS OF SECRETARY VANCE'S CLARIFICATIONS AND THE BACKGROUND COMMENTS OF OTHER DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS (SEE SEPTTEL). HOWEVER, LEADING PAPERS HAVE STRESSED THE WARMTH OF THE RECEPTION ACCORDED RABIN AND NOTE THE CONGENIALITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING HIS TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT.

2. ISRAEL'S PAPERS HAD TENDED TO MINIMIZE BEFOREHAND THE RESULTS TO BE EXPECTED FROM THE VISIT BY DESCRIBING IT MODESTLY IN TERMS OF AN OPPURTUNITY FOR THE TWO LEADERS TO GET ACQUANITED AND NOTING THAT RABIN WAS NOT COMING WITH A SHOPPING LIST. THE STORIES AND COMMENTS IN THE PAPERS OF MARCH 8 AND 9, HOWEVER, SEEMED TO REFLECT
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SURPRISE AT HOW WELL THE VISIT WAS GOING. TYPICAL OF THE ENTHUSIASM EXHIBITED IN PRO-ALIGNMENT PAPERS IS AL HAMISHMAR'S (MAPAM) EDITORIAL: "THE MANIFESTLY FRIENDLY REMARKS MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER, THE REPORTEDLY UNPRECEDENTED EVENING CONVERSATION, THE UNDERLINED PERSONAL CONTACT BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER, ALL ARE PROOF OF THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT, WHOSE MAIN OBJECTIVE

WAS TO BUILD AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE CONTINUED RELATIONS WITH THE NEW PRESIDENT."

3. IN LESS GLOWING TERMS THE MASS-CIRCULATION MAARIV, EDITORIALIZES THAT: "THE U.S. SEEMS TO HAVE REGARDED THE VISIT AS A OPPORTUNITY TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION, RATHER THAN A MEETING AT WHICH DIFFERENCES SHOULD BE STRAIGHTENED OUT. WHILE DIFFERENCES REMAIN, IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT FUTURE ATTEMPTS TO TACKLE THEM WILL BE MADE IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND JERUSALEM CONTINUES."

4. THE EDITORIAL IN ISRAEL'S OTHER AFTERNOON DAILY YEDIOT AHARONOT WAS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL ARTICLES THAT TIED THE VISIT TO THE FORTHCOMING KNESSET ELECTIONS. IT WROTE, "ALL THAT CAN BE GLEANED FROM THE ATMOSPHERE WHICH SURROUNDS THE RABIN CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON IS THAT CARTER IS TRYING NOT TO BE TOO SPECIFIC TOWARDS ISRAEL...CARTER'S STATEMENTS ARE PLEASANT AND SOUND LIKE COMPENSATION FOR THE ABSENCE OF COMMITMENTS. ONE IS LED TO BELIEVE THAT WHETHER RABIN BRINGS BACK SOMETHING DEFINITE OR NOT, THE PRESIDENT WILL NOT SEND HIM AWAY EMPTY-HANDED BUT WILL PROVIDE HIM WITH SOME PROVISIONS WHICH COULD BE OF PRACTICAL USE ON THE WAY TO THE POLLS."

5. MOST WRITERS ALSO INDICATED SATISFACTION WITH THE DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC ISSUES. THUS MARGALIT WRITING IN HAARETZ: "THERE IS MUCH GREATER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. ON THE ESSENCE OF PEACE,
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BASED ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT CARTER." AND IN DAVAR BARNEA REPORTS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS PROMISED A SPEEDY REPLY TO ISRAEL'S REQUEST FOR CO-PRODUCTION OF THE F-16 AND HE TELLS OF AGREEMENT ON A PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING U.S. APPROVAL OF ISRAELI ARMS EXPORTS.
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